

## Proposed Changes to the United States Classes, Standards, and Grades for Rabbits (AMS 70.300 *et seq.*)

Proposed changes are in **bold**.

### United States Classes of Ready-to-Cook Rabbits

#### ' 70.300 General.

For the purpose of AMS ' ' 70.300 through 70.302, the classes of ready-to-cook rabbits are fryer or young rabbit, and roaster, **stewer**, or mature rabbit.

#### ' 70.301 Fryer or young rabbit. \* \* \*

#### ' 70.302 Roaster, **stewer**, or mature rabbit.

A roaster, **stewer**, or mature rabbit is a mature or old rabbit carcass of any weight, but usually over 4 pounds, processed from a rabbit usually **6 months** of age or older. The flesh of a roaster, **stewer**, or mature rabbit is more firm and coarse grained, and the muscle fiber is slightly darker in color and less tender, and the fat may be more creamy in color than that of a fryer or young rabbit.

### United States Standards for Quality of Ready-to-Cook Rabbits

#### ' 70.310 General.

##### (a) \* \* \*

(c) In interpreting the respective requirements specified in AMS ' ' 70.320 through 70.322 for A quality, B quality, and C quality, **the intensity, aggregate area involved, quantity, and locations of:**

(1) **deformities;**

(2) freedom from foreign material;

(3) **discolorations (whether or not caused by processing operations and flesh bruises), and cut and tears;**

(4) **disjointed and** broken bones; and

(5) freezing defects, as such defects individually or in combination detract from the general appearance, shall be considered in determining the particular quality of an individual carcass or part.

##### (d) \* \* \*

Standards for Quality of Ready-to-Cook Rabbits

§70.320 A Quality.

(a) *Conformation*. The carcass or part is free from deformities that detract from the appearance of the product, or that affect the normal distribution of flesh. Slight deformities may be present.

(b) *Fleshing*. The carcass or part has a well-developed covering of flesh considering the kind, class, and part. The flesh is thick, well rounded, and full. The muscle texture is firm.

(c) *Cuts and tears*.

(1) The carcass or part may have cuts and tears in the flesh, provided the maximum length of all cuts and tears does not exceed the length specified in the following table:

Grade A	Maximum area permitted	
	Carcass	Part
Loin Rump <sup>1</sup> , and Hind Legs	¼ in.	¼ in.
Forelegs, Ribs, and Elsewhere	½ in.	½ in.

<sup>1</sup> A cut or tear ½ in. in length is permitted at the rump adjacent to the backbone.

(2) Cuts or tears, caused by skin removal that tears the thin outer tissue covering the flesh, are permitted provided: they do not detract from the appearance of the product, and the cut or tear does not result in an indentation in the muscle tissue.

(d) *Disjointed and broken bones, and missing parts*.

(1) The carcass or part is free of crushed or shattered bones caused by the removal of the head and feet. The ends of leg bones may not be broken beyond the point where the muscle tissue begins.

(2) The carcass or part may have not more than one disjointed bone and is free of broken bones. No parts may be missing from the carcass.

(e) *Discolorations*. The requirements contained in this section are applicable to discolorations of the connective tissue and flesh of ready-to-cook rabbits as defined in the regulations 7 CFR §70.1.

(1) The carcass or part may have slight discolorations, provided the discolorations do not detract from the appearance of the product.

(2) The carcass or part may have lightly shaded areas of discolorations, provided the aggregate area of all discolorations does not exceed the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Grade A	Maximum area permitted	
	Carcass	Part
Loin, Rump, and Hind Legs	1 in.	$\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Forelegs, Ribs, or Elsewhere	2 in.	$\frac{3}{4}$ in.

(3) The carcass or part is free of moderately shaded discolorations, except that moderately shaded discolorations are permitted adjacent to the bone and must not exceed an area of a circle with a diameter of  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch, and are free of blood clots.

(4) Evidence of incomplete bleeding, such as more than an occasional slight coagulation in a vein, is not permitted.

(f) *Freezing defects.* With respect to consumer packaged rabbit carcasses or parts, **the carcass or part shall be** practically free from defects **that** result from handling or occur during freezing or storage. The following defects are permitted if they, alone or in combination, detract only very slightly from the appearance of the carcass or part:

(1) Slight darkening **of the meat** provided that the frozen carcass or part has a generally bright appearance.

(2) Occasional **dry areas on** the outer layer of flesh.

(3) Occasional small areas showing a thin layer of clear or pinkish colored ice.

§70.321 B Quality.

(a) *Conformation.* The carcass or part is practically free of deformities. Moderate deformities may be present, which do not materially affect the normal distribution of flesh or detract from the appearance of the product.

(b) *Fleshing.* The carcass or part has a fairly well developed covering of flesh considering the kind, class, and part. The flesh is fairly thick, fairly well rounded, and fairly well fleshed. The muscle texture is fairly firm.

(c) *Cuts and tears.*

(1) The carcass or part may have cuts and tears in the flesh, provided the maximum length of all cuts and tears does not exceed the length specified in the following table:

Grade B	Maximum area permitted	
	Carcass	Part
Loin, Rump <sup>1</sup> , and Hind Legs,	$\frac{1}{2}$ in.	$\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Forelegs, Ribs, and Elsewhere	1 in.	1 in.

<sup>1</sup> A cut or tear 1 in. in length is permitted at the rump adjacent to the backbone.

(2) Cuts or tears, caused by skin removal that tears the thin outer tissue covering the flesh, are permitted provided: they detract only very slightly from the appearance of the product, and the cut or tear does not result in a significant indentation in the muscle tissue.

(d) *Disjointed and broken bones, and missing parts.*

(1) The carcass or part is free of crushed or shattered bones caused by the removal of the head and feet. The ends of leg bones may be broken beyond the point where the muscle tissue begins.

(2) The carcass may have not more than two disjointed and one broken bone. No parts may be missing.

(3) Parts may have not more than one disjointed bone and are free of broken bones.

(e) *Discolorations.*

(1) The carcass or part may have moderately shaded areas of discolorations, provided they are free of blood clots, and the aggregate area of all discolorations does not exceed the area of a circle having the diameter specified in the following table:

Grade B	Maximum area permitted	
	Carcass	Part
Loin, Rump, Hind Legs	2 in.	1 in.
Forelegs, Ribs, or Elsewhere	3 in.	1½ in.

(2) Evidence of incomplete bleeding shall be no more than slight.

(f) *Freezing defects.* With respect to consumer-packaged rabbits or parts, **the carcass or part** may have moderate defects resulting from handling or occurring during freezing or storage. The flesh shall have a sound appearance, but may lack brightness. A few **dry areas on** the outer flesh **are permitted**. Moderate areas showing layers of clear, pinkish, or reddish colored ice are permitted.

§70.322 C Quality.

A carcass or part that does not meet the requirements for A or B quality may be C quality, **provided the flesh is substantially intact and the carcass or part complies with the following:**

(a) *Conformation.* The carcass or part may have pronounced deformities that detract from the appearance of the product, or affect the distribution of flesh.

**(b) *Fleshing.*** The carcass or part may have an under-developed covering of flesh considering the kind, class, and part. The muscle texture may be soft or flabby.

**(c) *Cuts and tears.*** The carcass or part may have cuts or tears in the flesh and those caused by skin removal in excess of B quality, provided that the normal meat yield is not materially affected and the flesh is substantially intact.

**(d) *Disjointed and broken bones, and missing parts.***

**(1)** The carcass or part is free of crushed or shattered bones caused by the removal of the head. The ends of leg bones may be shattered and broken beyond the point where the muscle tissue begins.

**(2)** The carcass may have disjointed bones and not more than five broken bones. No parts may be missing.

**(3)** Parts may have not more than one disjointed and one broken bone.

**(e) *Discolorations.*** The carcass or part may have moderately shaded areas of discolorations that do not render the carcass or part unfit for food.

**(f) *Freezing defects.*** The carcass or part may have severe defects resulting from handling or occur during freezing or storage. The carcass or part may have large dried areas on the outer layer of flesh. No limit on the amount or color of ice present.

## Ready-to-Cook Rabbits

### Summary of Specifications for Standards of Quality for Individual Carcasses or Parts

Effective 2001

(Not All Inclusive -- Minimum Requirements and Maximum Defects Permitted)

	A Quality		B Quality		C Quality	
Conformation:	Normal, slight deformities		Moderate deformities		Pronounced deformities	
Fleshing:	Thick, well rounded, and full – well fleshed considering kind and class		Fairly thick, fairly well rounded - fairly well fleshed considering kind and class		Under-developed covering of flesh considering kind and class	
Muscle texture	Firm		Fairly firm		Soft or flabby	
Cuts and Tears:	Carcass <sup>1a</sup>	Parts <sup>1a</sup>	Carcass <sup>1b</sup>	Parts <sup>1b</sup>	Carcass	Parts
Loin, Rump, Hind Legs	1/4 in.	1/4 in.	1/2 in.	1/2 in.	No limit, provided meat yield is not materially affected	
Forelegs, Ribs, Elsewhere	1/2 in.	1/2 in.	1 in.	1 in.		
Disjointed and Broken Bones:	Carcass <sup>2a</sup>	Parts <sup>2a</sup>	Carcass <sup>2b</sup>	Parts <sup>2b</sup>	Carcass <sup>2c</sup>	Parts <sup>2c</sup>
	1 disjointed, no broken	1 disjointed, no broken	2 disjointed, 1 broken	1 disjointed, no broken	No limit disjointed, 5 broken	1 disjointed, 1 broken
Missing Parts:	None		None		None	
Discolorations:	Lightly Shaded <sup>3</sup>	Moderately Shaded <sup>4a</sup>	Moderately Shaded <sup>4b</sup>		Moderately Shaded	
Carcasses						
Loin, Rump, Hind Legs	1 in.	None	2 in.		No limit	
Elsewhere	2 in.	None	3 in.			
Discolorations:	Lightly Shaded <sup>3</sup>	Moderately Shaded <sup>4a</sup>	Moderately Shaded <sup>4b</sup>		Moderately Shaded	
Parts						
Loin, Rump, Hind Legs	1/2 in.	None	1 in.		No limit	
Forelegs and Ribs	3/4 in.	None	1 1/2 in.			
Trimming:	Carcasses or parts may be graded after a defect has been removed.					
Freezing Defects:	Slight darkening provided the carcass or part has a generally bright appearance. Occasional dry areas and small areas of clear or pinkish colored ice may be present		May lack brightness. A few dry areas and moderate areas with layers of clear, pinkish, or reddish colored ice may be present.		Large dry areas and no limit on amount or color of ice present.	

<sup>1a</sup> A cut or tear up to 1/2 in. in length is permitted at the rump adjacent to the backbone. Cuts or tears caused by skin removal are permitted provided they do not result in an indentation in the muscle tissue, and do not detract from the appearance of the product.

<sup>1b</sup> A cut or tear up to 1 in. in length is permitted at the rump adjacent to the backbone. Cuts or tears caused by skin removal are permitted provided they do not result in a significant indentation in the muscle tissue, and only very slightly detract from the appearance of the product.

<sup>2a</sup> The ends of leg bones may not be shattered or broken beyond the point where the muscle tissue begins.

<sup>2b</sup> The ends of leg bones may not be shattered, but may be broken beyond the point where the muscle tissue begins.

<sup>2c</sup> The ends of leg bones may be shattered and broken beyond the point where the muscle tissue begins.

<sup>3</sup> Evidence of incomplete bleeding, such as more than an occasional slight coagulation in a vein, is not permitted.

<sup>4a</sup> Areas adjacent to the bone may have moderate discolorations, provided they do not exceed an aggregate area of 1/4 in. and are free of blood clots.

<sup>4b</sup> Evidence of incomplete bleeding shall be no more than slight. Discolorations shall be free of blood clots.